

ALICE FINN A MERMAID.

Upon a morning jocular,
The half of one binocular
Might have observed two sailormen a-strolling by the sea,
And by their actions dignified,
It very easy signified
That one of 'em was Henry Smith, and one of 'em was me.

The day was rather tropical,
Our talk was rather topical,
When suddenly upon a rock we saw just what we seen:
A mermaid quite attractive like
A-settin' there, inactive like,
And sort of doin' up 'er hair, which same was long and green.

I made as if to speak to her,
But what I said was Greek to her;
For she remained obli-vi-ous, a-powderin' 'er nose,
And with a pair of girley-gaws,
She done her hair in curly-kews,
And kind o' smiled, as if to say, "I'm pretty, I suppose."

I yelled, "Aho-y there!" breezily,
She turned around quite easily,
And snapped 'er fingers in the air as perky as could be.
(The way you talk to foreigners)
At two lone, lornsome mariners,
And one of 'em was Henry Smith and one of 'em was me.

Though Henry's face was laffable,
I doffed my bonnet affable,
And said: "Though me and Henry Smith has sailed for years a score,
In schooner, junk and tub marine,
A charming maiden submarine,
A settin' plain before our eyes, we never seen before."

She looked at first suspiciously,
And then she spoke deliciously,
"I've often wished a sailorman me hand and heart to win."
Says Henry, "Thankee, marm," says 'e,
Says she, "I meant no harm," says she,
"For I'm a niece o' Neptune, and me name is Alice Finn."

I speaks without a falter: "Ma'am,
I've tackled round Gibraltar, ma'am,
I've navigated rocks and shoals on many ocean tours;
I've sailed through Spain and Venice, too,
But never seen a mermaid to
The art o' navigation like them handsome eyes o' yours."

Says Hank (his mind's so sordid-like!):
"I've got some money hoarded-like,
Full fifteen hundred dollars in the bank o' Greenwich town,
(Intention matrimonial)
And in yon housecolonial,
A mermaid and a mariner might wed and settle down."

Says she, "My fear of losing you
Makes matters hard in choosing you"
Just then above the waves appeared her mother, Mrs. Finn,
Who said: "Who's them there men, my dear?
What! flirting there again, my dear?
Your father's home for luncheon, now—come in, my child, come in."

So Alice, lookin' sweetly up,
Just tied her back hair neatly up,
Then dove her ker-plunk into the sea and never spoke at all;
Just gave a sort o' hop-and-skip,
And hit the water flop-and-flip,
Without so much as askin' 'if we'd drop in for a call!

Says Hank, "She tried to devil us!"
Says I, "Her natur's frivolous!"
Says Hank, "Her mind is shallow, but 'er home is deep," says 'e,
And so, as meek as tailor-men,
Back walked two lonesome sailormen,
And one of 'em was Henry Smith and one of 'em was me.

—The Century.

On the Side of Chimborazo.

By ALBERT W. TOLMAN.

The following narrative recounts a stirring experience of Joseph Belmont, a young Englishman of science. The story is given practically in his own words:

In the latter part of 1889 I was employed in Ecuador by one of the English Universities to estimate altitudes and measure distances among the higher peaks of the Andes, and to collect information about the country and its people. During December I camped for some time with a single guide on the slopes of Chimborazo, about 1000 feet below the snow line.

My companion was called Manuel; he had no surname that I could discover. He was a full-blooded Indian who had been recommended to me by a Spanish official. I found him silent and stolid, but thoroughly trustworthy.

Much of our time was spent in making our way along the summit of sharp ridges that fell off abruptly on either side, in creeping cautiously up steep slopes of rolling stones, and in scaling sheer precipices, exposed to the cruel winds that haunt those high altitudes.

One morning we left our camp at early dawn, and did not turn back until late in the evening. Our labors that day were more than usually arduous, and the thinness of the air caused us much suffering. With panting breaths we had crept along knife-like edges until late in the afternoon. The sun was setting, and we were two miles from camp.

For some time we proceeded very slowly. The light disappeared from the west, the stars came out and the moon bathed the mountainside in a pale bluish radiance. Manuel, who was going ahead, came to a sudden stop. Right across our path lay a slope of rocks about 300 feet wide. It was a declivity innocent enough to look upon, a smooth slant at an angle of about forty degrees, but at the lower edge it stopped as clean and square as if it had been cut off with a knife. We were about three-quarters of the way down. Five hundred feet above us the slope started at the foot of an unscalable cliff; 200 feet below it stopped. I give these figures as approximate merely, for in the moonlight it was difficult to judge accurately of distance.

Beyond the slope lay our camp, and in some way we must get across, but we knew that if once those rocks were started rolling, we should be swept over the precipice in the avalanche. The passage would have been a very easy matter had there been any ice upon the incline to cement the pieces together. But so far as we could see there was not a particle, nor was it difficult to understand why this was so. The slope faced the northeast, and all day long the hot equatorial sun lay upon it, preventing any moisture from gathering.

One way or the other we must go. We could not stand long inactive without becoming so chilled that we could not go either forward or back. Which course should we take?

The answer was plain. To retrace our way was impossible. The jour-

ney had been hard by day. Now, when the thin, shifting moonlight rendered it difficult to calculate distance, and black chasms of shadow flung themselves athwart the path, the idea was not to be entertained for an instant. Food, warmth, shelter lay before us; to retreat meant to perish of cold and hunger and fatigue.

For several minutes we stood in silence, gazing out upon the slope. "Shall we try it?" said I last to my guide.

It was the first time in our acquaintance of two months that I had ever seen him show hesitation; generally he was prompt in his decisions. But this time he realized the danger better than I did, and before replying he stooped, picked up a bit of rock, and flung it out into the middle of the declivity. It started a miniature avalanche, which swept rapidly down and disappeared over the edge of the precipice.

The most terrifying thing about it was that after the rocks fell we could hear no sound for several seconds, and then only a faint rumble thousands of feet below. It was a warning of the fate that a mis-step might bring upon us.

But nothing was to be gained by delay, and at last we decided to attempt the passage. The one thing that gave us hope of getting over in safety was the appearance here and there of a boulder, apparently projecting from the solid ledge beneath, rearing its head above the surrounding debris like a little island.

Manuel went first, putting his feet down very carefully, one after the other. I followed, stepping exactly in his tracks. Once started, there was no turning back. I did not fully realize the treacherous nature of that rocky slope until we were upon it. We were fifteen minutes traversing a space of fifty feet.

The farther we got out the sorer I grew that we had come. The whole slide was bound together as a single mass. The displacement of one bit of rock imparted an impulse to the

next below, and took away its support from the next above. A single false step, a slip on the part of either, would involve both in a fearful catastrophe.

We did not say a word to each other. All our energies were needed for crossing the slope. The fatiguing nature of that cautious tread I cannot tell you. Every muscle was tense to rigidity, every nerve keyed high; our eyes were strained to detect the smallest motion, and our ears were alert to catch the slightest sound.

Seventy-five feet out we reached a boulder that rose above the shingle. It barely afforded footing for us both. We did not dare to remain long upon it, for the temperature was far below the freezing point, and we were stiff with cold. After a few minutes Manuel made a sign and once more we took up our perilous journey.

We had gone about fifteen feet, when my guide, who was two yards in advance, gave a sharp exclamation. There was a harsh rattling sound.

"Run, senior, run!" Manuel shouted, and his great leaps set me the example.

He must have stepped on what was the keystone of the entire mass, so set that its slightest movement would affect the whole. As I ran I cast one hasty glance upward. I verily believe that every piece of rock from top to bottom was in motion at once. The whole mountainside seemed to be crawling toward us.

First there came the faint rolling and clinking of scattered pebbles, then a loud rattle, swelling into the roar of an avalanche, as rock after rock added itself to the sliding mass. One instant the declivity lay silent and motionless in the moonlight; the next it was all alive, slipping, grinding, roaring, with the sound of a stone crusher in full action.

It was useless to think of gaining the ledge at which we had aimed. Twenty-five feet below it was another, not quite so high, but longer and narrower, and toward this we bent our course in flying leaps.

There was no chance to pick the best spot for holding on. We threw ourselves down upon the ledge on our faces, fortunately clutching a shoulder. Had we gained the boulder above, at which we had aimed, we should have been swept away by the flood that poured over it. As it was it broke the force of the slide and kept the great mass of rock away from us.

Our situation was still perilous in the extreme. The ledge which afforded us refuge rose only a few inches above the surrounding debris. Had the stones confined themselves to rolling it would have been bad enough. But the smaller ones, deflected and shot high into the air by passing over the ledge above, rained down upon us like the spray of a rocky waterfall.

It was fortunate that our eyes and teeth escaped, for, as we lay, we were obliged to face the avalanche. Of course we could not shelter our faces with our hands, for we needed every finger to hold on with. So we ducked our heads as low as possible, and the missiles beat a tattoo upon our skulls until our hair was matted with blood. Had the stones been any larger we should have been battered into insensibility and quickly hurled over the precipice.

Once I was in deadly peril. A rock, larger than the rest, struck my fingers, numbing them and causing me to relax my hold. My grasp was torn away, and for the fraction of a terrible second I was at the mercy of the torrent. Then my guide, at the risk of his own life, let go the ledge with one hand and clutched my shoulder. Again I regained my place and clung with redoubled strength.

The force of the slide abated. The dust cleared. Lastly a few scattered rocks dashed down over the denuded surface. At one instant a stony Niagara seemed to be roaring around us; then we heard the distant rumble of its fall die away in the depths of the ravine. The next moment there was utter stillness, as sudden as if a great door, padded and muffled, had shut out the sound. Only the snow-crowned peak, high above us, gave back the pale light of the moon.

Then we saw the reason why the mass had slid so smoothly and rapidly. The slope was practically a plane inclined at a sharp angle, broken, to be sure, by a few projecting ledges, but in the main free from obstructions. How long it had been collecting its load we could only conjecture. As the cliff above disintegrated under the action of frost and rain and ice, small pieces fell from it one by one, until the whole slant became charged with fragments ready to be set in motion by the least impulse. Possibly the next falling rock of any considerable size might have

CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT.



IMPOLITENESS.
A "normous dog came in one day,
And he and I commenced to play;
And we had fun, and nice fun, too,
Long as he 'aved as a dog should do,
But when he got so awful rough,
I hollered that I'd had enough,
But 'stead of stopping as he should,
As anybody'd think he would,
He knocked me down and tried to see
If he could sit on all of me.
—From "Our Baby Book," by Fanny Y. Cory.

TRUSTING THE BOY.
A business man sat in his office talking with a friend, when a messenger boy appeared in the doorway. He was so small that his chin hardly came above the edge of the desk, but he had a fine air of self-reliance and an honest-looking pair of blue eyes.

The business man smiled and nodded, and the boy smiled and nodded back at him. Without many words there seemed to be a good understanding between them.

"Remember where the First National Bank is?" asked the man, carefully placing a roll of banknotes between the leaves of a bank book and snapping a rubber band round the cover.

"Yes, sir," said the boy. "Still in the same place, sir."

"Well, take this over and deposit it for me," and the man handed the boy the bank book and its contents.

The boy vanished, and the visitor drew a breath of surprise mingled with consternation.

"Do you think that's safe?" he asked.

"Perfectly," answered the other.

"But do you think it's good for the boy?"

"How so?"

"To put temptation in his way like that. Why, you must have trusted him with fully a hundred dollars! That's a pretty big temptation for a small youngster. It would be worse for him to steal it than for you to lose it."

"I have thought of that," said the business man, more soberly, "and some youngsters I wouldn't risk with it. But the way I look at it is this: The earlier a boy gets used to temptation in this world the better he is able to resist it when he grows older."

"Now, this is the kind of a boy who likes to be trusted; appreciates it; hugs it to his bosom; considers himself, in fact, as an essential part of my business."

"The first time I let him deposit money for me it was a case of necessity. My clerks were all out, I couldn't go myself, and yet the money had to be in the bank before closing time. So I rang up the messenger company, and—"

"You'd never even seen the boy before?" interrupted the other.

"If I had I'd never noticed him particularly. Well, in came our friend Johnny—just a plain, honest-looking youngster in uniform. He looked scared when he saw the roll of bills, and that gave me confidence in him. But he was back in ten minutes, and when he came in it was almost funny to look at him."

"Responsibility had made him grow up, so to speak, in those ten minutes. You see, I had trusted him, and he knew it, and he had proved himself worthy. Won his spurs, as it were."

"Now I have an arrangement with the messenger company to send Johnny whenever he's in when I ask for a messenger. And Johnny, unknown to himself, is right on the way to a better job in this office when he gets big enough."

As he spoke the door opened, and Johnny, grinning a dignified grin, appeared with the bank book.—Youth's Companion.

HONEST LITTLE DICK.
In all my life I never saw so honest a little cat as our Dick, says one who writes in Little Folks. He not only never was guilty of theft, but he would not allow any other cat to steal if he could help it. The dear little fellow, however, was strongly tempted once, and came very near losing his good name.

One day the cook carried out a pail of nice little frost-fish, and set it down in the yard. Dick was there. Dick always was near by when there were good things to eat. The cook went back into the house, and Dick sat down to wait for her return; and two of his especial friends were at the window upstairs looking down to see what "honest Dick" would do.

The cook was a long time coming back to dress the fish; and all the while Dick kept watch—now on the pail, now on the kitchen door. At last he went somewhat nearer to the pail, then nearer, then nearer. Ah! frost-fish smell so good. Dick's little nose almost touched them. And then he sat down and cried at the top of his voice for cook to return quickly and save him from being a thief.

But she did not come. At last Dick put his forepaws on the edge of the pail. Then he looked at the kitchen door and cried again. But the door did not open. So, slowly, slowly, a paw reached down in the pail. But it came back with a jerk, empty, and its owner ran around the corner of the house where he could not see or smell those nice frost-fish any more. He did not want to be a thief, and we believe the little fellow never came near it again.

TOLD OF INDIA.
An Indian merchant wished to dispose of an old elephant and took it to a fair. As soon as he arrived he noticed a man who, without saying a word, began to walk around the animal, examining it attentively on all sides. The merchant became very anxious, for he feared that the man had found out that his elephant was not worth much. He took him aside and whispered in his ear: "I see a customer coming. Do not say a word until I have sold the beast, and I will give you fifty rupees." The man looked at the merchant and wonderingly complied with his request. It happened that the customer had more money than sense, so that he was easily taken in. When the bargain was completed and the elephant led away by its new owner, the merchant handed the fifty rupees to the silent man, saying: "Now, I want you to tell me how you discovered the defect in his left leg. I thought I had concealed it so skillfully." "I have discovered nothing," replied the stranger. "It is the first elephant I have ever seen, and I wanted to know which was the head and which was the tail."—From the Newark Call.

SUGGESTED POEMS.
In each phrase below a well-known poem is suggested. How many of them can you guess?

1. The toll of affection's wasted.
2. The attempt of Plus X. on a male person.
3. A temporary home by the sea.
4. Imprisoned by wintry elements.
5. The burglary of a door fastening.
6. The suspension of a waterfowl.
7. One engaged in commerce in an Italian city.
8. A musician in motley of a town in Prussia.
9. The trip.
10. We form a factor of 21.
11. The abandoned hamlet.
12. A wedding token, and a volume.
13. The sinit of work.
14. A past day, a present one, and all future time.
15. Camping on the same spot that we did before.
16. Pastoral poems of royalty.
17. The king's daughter.
18. A legend for faultfinders.
19. The song of the only remaining singer.
20. An Italian girl goes by.
21. The old salt.
22. Poem on a Hellenic vase.
23. Poem of the blues.
24. The country seat of laziness.
25. Earthly bliss forfeited.

Belgium officially frowns on cremation.

THE ART OF PAPER-MAKING ought to be regarded as one of the most useful which has ever been invented in any age or country; for it is manifest that every other discovery must have continued useless to society if it could not have been disseminated by manuscripts or by printing. —MATTHIAS KOOPS

—From the Printing Art Sample Book.